

and officiate in the ceremonies, but it is perhaps true to say that only the beasts for minor sacrifices (recovery from illnesses, etc.) are killed by them. Hofmayer states that the distinctive mark of the *laret* is a necklace of disc beads of cowrie egg-shell, but that they also wear anklets of glass beads, white and green. The *laret* eat the flesh of the sacrifices and drink the milk of the cattle belonging to the shrine; they are responsible too for the disposal of the bones of the sacrifice, which they cast into the river.

The contents of the *largo* vary, but they always include certain sacred objects, called *alade*, representing those used by Nyakang and his companions.

In 1910 we were told that one of the five huts of the Fenikang shrine was in a special sense the house of Nyakang, which he was thought to inhabit. It was distinguished by a number of very rough paintings on its outer wall, some of which could be recognized as representing animals, but we could not learn that the paintings had any special significance. Before the door of the hut were a number of horns of the cattle slain in sacrifice (in 1921 wrongly described as elephant tusks), their broad ends thrust into the ground; within there were said to be skins on the floor, as if for Nyakang to rest upon. Some of the "spears of Nyakang" (*alade*) are kept here, and there is in this shrine an extremely sacred mask, which may be kept in this hut or may be preserved with some of the sacred spears and a number of elephant tusks in one of the other huts of the shrine, used by the guardians and for storing the millet brought as offerings when the crop is cut. In 1921 we were much struck with the resemblance of the shrine to a homestead, with exceptionally large hut; it had been rebuilt since 1901, when we first visited Fenikang, and there were now no horns in front of any hut. At this time (1921) the shrine had been entrusted by the king to the care of a most intelligent elderly Dinka woman, by name Akar—widow of the kings Kar and Faden—who was the chief priestess of the shrine. She had three huts and a cattle byre near the shrine; in one hut she kept her beer, and here millet was ground, the two others were for her slaves, who as well as her cattle were provided by the king. We are not certain whether she ever slept in the shrine. According to Shilluk custom Akar had left Koshuk during her two pregnancies, but on neither occasion had she been sent to Fenikang; it is, indeed, improbable that a royal wife would be sent to a village containing a shrine, so it might be difficult to accommodate her cattle and those

of the shrine attached, as well as the village
beasts.

302 *Ceremonies and People*

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young men are very fond of plaiting their hair with cowhairs or other fine material.

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The men and generally also unmarried girls go naked. In recent times many men wear a cotton cloth, which is knotted on the left shoulder, and hang round the right hip; chiefly people living near the station have partly adapted this clothing; the Shilluk as yet wear only a cotton cloth in a manner for many a Shilluk to work for a few days or weeks in the native compound; the number of them who do so is apparently increasing. Animal skins are generally not worn by men as an every-day dress. Women, and sometimes girls are dressed in cow, calf, or antelope skins, which are either wrapped round the body, or hung over the shoulder.

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[The full dress of a woman is described by Mrs. Giffen in "The Egyptian Sudan" as follows: First of all there is a small apron. This is a piece of coarse cloth — originally white — about two feet long and eighteen inches wide. It is made of two thicknesses, and it is tied by strings fastened to two corners around the waist, one just below the shoulders, and falls down to the knees.

Then there are two skins, of sheep, goat, calf, gazelle or whatever it may be, sewed with the hair on, and worn with the hair side out. One of them is tied around the waist, using one binding and one binding of the skin for strings to do with. The tail and the other two legs — or the skin of them — hang and flap around the legs as ornaments. Indeed there are sometimes ornamented with beads, brass or iron rings. This skin is tied in front so as to show the white apron underneath.

The other skin is worn on the upper part of the body. The two and hind legs on one side are fastened together at their very tips; this is then slipped over the head, the legs of the skin thus tied together resting on the right shoulder, and the other side passing under the left arm. This is the full dress of a woman. Of course in addition to this they may wear as many beads and other ornaments as they can afford; strings of beads around the waist, neck, and arms, and armbands, of brass, sometimes as many as ten or twelve brass or iron rings, weighing several pounds, and extending from the hand half way to the elbow. There are cow horns, but these right in the bush, and each made fast by the blacksmith. Circular rings of iron are often worn by the older women on the ankles. There are very heavy and profuse grass hoops in the bush.

The little girls wear the apron only, and when a little older, put on the shoulder skin, and when full grown wear the skin about the waist.]

When meeting for a dance both men and women are richly dressed. While present at

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XXVI

Introduction

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a great dance. I have noted the ornaments and clothings worn by the young men and girls on the occasion. They are a) for the men: above the ankles a strip of sheep or goat skin with the hair on it outside; the same just below the knee; above it are the knee-bells, a number of metal bells each consisting in a hollow, oblong piece of iron, in which a small iron ball moves, thus producing a rattling sound; about the loins there is a skin of leopard,opard, wild cat, or jackal, suspended on a eight to twelve-fold giraffe of ostrich egg shells; the giraffe may also consist of European beads; on the wrist a bracelet of brass or iron, above the elbow an ivory ring, above it a six- to eight-fold ring of antback; about the neck they wear one or more necklaces of beads; on the head ornaments of horse-tail or other long hair, and ostrich feathers; round the forehead strips of red or white beades are fastened; each man holds two lances, two clubs, one shield, the lances generally being adorned with ostrich-plumes; sometimes the skin-cloth round the waist is adorned with bells or iron chains. Face, arms, and the upper part of the body are smeared with red earth, over which melted butter is poured and stripes of ash are drawn. Several, if not all, of the dancers carry a dancing-stick, a long stick, bent at its upper end like the handle of a walking stick, and covered with brass or some other metal. b) The girls present the following appearance: above the ankles a bundle of heavy iron rings, on the loins a large antelope- or more frequently calf-skin suspended by a bundle of ostrich egg shell chains; round the neck and hanging down on the breasts a large bundle of blue or green beads; on the wrists bracelets of beads; round the forehead a string of beads; the hair is sometimes dressed on the occasion; in the hair an ostrich or some other good feather is stuck, in one or two cases I saw even flowers instead of a feather; the girls are not painted, only anointed with oil.

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The most characteristic adornments of the men are thick, heavy bracelets and anklets of iron, brass, ivory, twisted antback, tree-bark, and cowrie shells. A wreath consisting of a strip of skin with the hair on the outside is laid round the head. Rings of metal, antback, cowrie or bark are worn above the ankle. Women and girls also wear anklets, but not ivory ones. The legs below the knees are loaded with heavy metal rings. Men as well as women, but chiefly the latter, pierce their ears at the top, and wear rings of brass or iron in them; sometimes merely a piece of metal or a stick is fastened in them. Both sexes wear strings of ostrich egg shells about the loins; besides these chains of cowries, of deer shells, of leather, and of varied beads are frequent. Many grown-up men and youths wear a necklace of a peculiar kind of small, well-shaped, and marble-like stones, which have about the size of a pigeon-egg; they are very much valued, and the natives always ask an ox in exchange for them. These

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SHILLUK NOTES

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Many things are denied to the young man who has not been properly initiated. He cannot take part in the formal dances, though he may join in the moonlight dances of the children. He is debarred from that pursuit so dear to the heart of the small boy, that is, he is not permitted to go to their tribal fights. However, he enjoys immunity from danger in these fights, as women and boys who have not danced are placed in the same class: it is a disgrace to kill them. In the few cases that I have known of small lads being killed, the ones who did the killing insisted that it was a mistake—that either the weapon had miscarried or they had mistaken the lad for someone else. Some timid lads may delay their initiation through fear, but to the majority it is a challenge to claim the full rights of men. The boy who has not danced is not permitted to wear the large necklaces made from the heavy hairs of the giraffe tail. He may wear a band of a few hairs, but the large ones called win are forbidden to him. He is also forbidden to wear the rek, the beads made from the eggshell of the ostrich. He is not permitted to use "ajōō" on his hair. This is a brick-like substance made by taking the cleaning from the floor of the stable in the morning, and then dried cow dung is put with it, and the resulting mixture is made into a loaf and burned with cow dung. It has a brick-like appearance when finished. It is then powdered. The young man puts oil on his head. The dust is poured on his head, and he keeps shaking his head to get it to form little balls. Other red preparations for the head may be used by the small boys. The lad who has not danced is not permitted to wear the skins of the various members of the cat tribe that the men wear at fights and dances. Finally, he is not permitted to make a formal call on the young ladies until after he has danced, and he is not granted any political rights in the village council.

The ages at the time of initiation vary. A strong lad is initiated at an earlier age than a weakling. The older men say that boys dance at an earlier age than they did formerly. The average age now is perhaps fifteen years. Some of the older men say it used to be at least twenty years. When all the older males in a family are dead a boy may be initiated younger so that he can inherit the property of his father, and also to give the family representation in the civic life of the village. Initiations may occur at both the spring and autumn dances. Those initiated the same year have a feeling of relationship for others of the same

643 villages by the way. One of the most noticeable features of the activities surrounding Nyikang is the principle that he and his lieutenants are given, or take, what they want from Shilluk as they pass. This [173] embassy to the north may well have its origin in a raiding party, and the two sections, whose duty it is to perform this journey, may have been obliged to render this form of military service to Nyikang. [177] Nowadays the silver and the cloth which were originally plunder, are bought from Kosti with money supplied by the *reth*, and contributed by Shilluk north of Kaka. Other requirements are ostrich feathers [537] procured from the country round Kaka for the head pieces of the images of Nyikang and Dak, by the people of Mwomo, and ivory for bracelets to be worn by various functionaries at the installation itself. This was provided from the tusks of elephants slain by the Shilluk in 1938.¹¹ They are very rare in Shilluk country. Bamboo is brought from Fungor in the eastern Nuba Mountains for the bodies of Nyikang's image, and those of his sons Dak and Cal. This is brought by the [283] people of Akwobai. Certain sacred ropes made from the fibre of dom palms, which grow round Fanyikang, are brought by "Dak", who with his followers makes a special pilgrimage some two months before the ceremonies.

643 An obligation lies on the chiefs of Fanyikang to produce skins
224 of the female Mrs. Gray antelope from Fanyikang Island. These are
272 required as the high robes of honour of the *reth*. They are worn by the *reth* himself and all the important people in the ceremony. To be presented with a Mrs. Gray skin is a mark of the greatest esteem. They are royal game, and are only killed in the first year of a new *reth*'s reign. On this occasion doubtless to save any complications with the government, which strictly preserves these antelopes, the operation was all over before the administration had word of it.

643 The houses of Fashoda had to be tidied up and new fences built,
356 but no new building in mud was done.

[132] ¹¹. In 1938 a few elephants invaded Shilluk country near Malakal, for the first time for many years.

INSTALLATION OF A RUK

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6. *Costumes.* All the warriors wore "war paint", their faces smeared with red, a mixture of brick dust and oil. Hair wigs and leather crests were worn by most men, including chiefs, who had no elaborate head-dresses of their own hair. Skins were worn as well as cloth. Leopard skins were worn, largely by wives of the late ruk, and by two ruk and chiefs, and the skins of the Mrs. Gray antelope and cow by those to whom they had been presented by Fafini. An interesting feature was the senior wife, who was clad in the deceased's clothes, his special cloak (*lee*), cummerbund, and sash, and the Scottish International Rugby cap which had been presented to Fafini by Mr. P. Munro. The cap had aged a lot in the last few years, but has established itself as part of the regalia, and the new ruk requested that a substitute be found for him for the ceremonies. 766
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NOTES TO PART 3

7. The ruk could not start without *nyikang*. Her status and significance are discussed in the text of the fourth day's ceremonies. It is possible that the lateness of the Kwa Okel was due to a conventional reluctance to produce the girl. 643
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8. Important personages in the ceremony, and female relatives of the ruk or attendants of Nyikang wore the skins of female Mrs. Gray antelope. The ruk himself wore one on the last two days of the ceremony. The chief of Gai Nyikang was observed on the morning of the first day's ceremonies wearing a black skin of the male Mrs. Gray. He soon changed to a female skin. 643
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9. The ruk was on a journey, and these were his attendants and his luggage. Nyikang had a similar retinue. 643
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10. The ruk's sacred shield is a counterpart to that of Nyikang. Like Nyikang's shield it should have been brought from Fashoda, but at the last moment it was forgotten.

11. The Kwa Otwet may originally have been a clan which has now died out. The prefix indicates an agnatic kinship group. They 614

932 of mud, assume enormous proportions, becoming rather like
502 the wide ears of an elephant. When they become too cumbersome he tires of them and has them cut off; he may then adopt another style, but as a rule the firs of youth have by this died down and he is content to leave his hair in its natural state.

302 Other highly esteemed hair-styles are the 'Cherry Pie', when the hair all over the head is moulded tightly into little red balls; the 'Cock's Comb' extending in a raised ridge from the crown of the head to the forehead while the rest is shaven, and the 'Hat Brush'. One day my houseboy appeared before my startled eyes with his head clean shaven save for a long elliptical patch of hair which he had dyed (with, I suspected, the Sisters' laundry blue) a brilliant blue colour. Again, a brave will sometimes scorn all such fripperies, and shave his head completely, polish it with oil and bind a string of flat blue beads around his forehead, achieving the effect of a decorated chocolate Easter egg.

562 As is usual in the East it is the male who wears the fine plumage while the female is subdued, if not indeed drab, in her colouring. A Shilluk girl makes no attempt to imitate the gorgeous decoration of her brother; her dirty grey cloth
[291] she may hem with an embroidered pattern in beads, and she
[591] may bedeck also with coloured beads the little apron she wears around her waist, but apart from a string of beads
[301] around her neck or arm and an iron or copper bangle, that is the only finery she will allow herself. She rarely paints
[302] her face or dresses her hair. On the occasion of a dance
[292] she will change her everyday cloth for a blue one or a mantle of deer skin, anoint her shaven head with oil and trick herself out with a few more beads, and having gone as far as fashion allows will rely upon personal charm to win her admirers.

174 The origins of the Shilluk people are not known with any
[197] degree of certainty. It would seem from their affinity, especially in language, with the Jur tribe of the Southern Sudan and with the Luo of the Bahr-el-Gazal and Kenya

173 To the west and north was the desert inhabited by peoples
174 greater and stronger than themselves and prepared to dis-
pute their advance in that direction; on the east the Nile
ran, and behind them were the swamplands, and Dinka.

175 They had no choice then but to stay in the country where
176 they are found today, a narrow belt of land extending
from Tonga in the south to Kaka in the north, a distance of
about 150 miles. Inland Shilluk settlements may be found
15 miles away from the river, but generally their villages,
containing from two to twenty or thirty families, stand no
further than a mile or two from its banks, straggling along
the whole length of the country. Since their first settling
there some hardy souls have crossed the Nile and found a
foothold on its eastern bank which they have gradually ex-
tended until they occupy a strip of land stretching from
opposite Kodok in the north to the River Sobat in the south,
and along that river for a distance of 50 miles or so. The
nature of the country on the other side, however, does not
differ from that of their original settlement, and the powerful
Dinka tribe has always opposed their progress inland, so
that those who have gone to live on the eastern bank are no
better off than they were before.

565 The social structure of the Shilluk tribe is built up from a
division of the people into four classes or castes. These classes
are not however exclusive, for they live together in the same
villages, share common tasks and recreations and even
intermarry. The basis of the division is the possession of
royal blood, or, ultimately, descent from Nyikang.

565 The first class is that of the Kwareth, the Royal Clan. To
644 this belong all those who are members of the royal houses
tracing their ancestry directly to Nyikang. Only a member
of this class is eligible for election as king. The first four
generations of a king's descendants are recognized as being
of royal blood and are entitled to the privileges of royalty.

[304] Thus they are permitted to retain all their teeth, they may
[301] wear an anklet of small white beads, and more than one
[292] according to the nearness of descent; they alone may dress
in a leopard skin for a dance.

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Mission on the Nile

[289] more practical purpose of tethering the cattle as towards sunset they come winding back from the pasture. In the hot months, if there is no danger from lions, they are left all night in the open and the byre is used as a dormitory by the boys and unmarried men of the village. It is the custom, too, for the unmarried girls to sleep together in vacant huts in the village, for the sleeping hut of a household is reserved for the householder and his wife and small children.

[415] The rear part of the store hut is taken up by an enormous circular grain basket, four feet high and the same in diameter, standing clear of the floor on a wooden, three-legged stand and safe from the depredations of white ants.

[252] Whenever possible, cooking is done outside, but during the rains it is done over a fire of sticks or millet stalks burning in a hollow scooped out in the floor near the wall. A variety of pots clutters the floor space: the large earthenware water pot, an earthenware pot and a shallow iron dish for cooking, small beer pots, a number of drinking bowls made from the tough rinds of gourds neatly halved and dried in the sun.

[353] The roofing poles, resting on the mud walls and rising to an apex, form convenient places for tucking away household goods and personal treasures. Such an item one cannot fail

[241] to notice is that of several large heads of grain; these are stored for the next season's planting, and no matter how desperate the food situation may become, they will remain untouched, for the next year's supply of food depends on this stock of seed. Behind the poles also may be found a fragment of a mirror, a couple of cigarette tins holding a little oil or a handful of beads, a girl's blue dancing cloth or even the

● [292] good wife's best Sunday frock, run up for her by the Sisters from some material brought from Kodok, probably some dreadful riot of green and red and yellow, hideous indeed to Western eyes, but to the proud owner more delightful than any Paris creation. Sometimes, to a visitor's distress, a line

[251] is slung across the hut on which hang dried fish or strips of meat. The high tone of these delicacies, the myriads of flies they attract and the thick, black smoke of the fire which, having no means of getting away, fills the hut, do not make

Shilluk Life

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the roar of voices and the clashing of weapons might well make him apprehensive that he would soon find himself on the scene of a bloody battle between two rival villages. However, the reality would prove such fears unfounded, for he would merely discover that the dance was on, and that Shilluk youth was taking an afternoon off to enjoy itself. The Shilluk is fonder of dancing, we may suppose, than of anything else in the world. He will walk, or rather run and leap and jump, for miles to a place where dancing is to take place; and as he goes along he will lift his unmusical voice in raucous song, or give vent to blood-curdling whoops, springing high into the air and lunging with his spear at imaginary foes. Then for the next two or three hours he will bruise his great flat feet by pounding them on the ground, and yell himself hoarse, yet return home at the end of it not a bit less exuberant than when he set off. It may be the rainy season when the food stores are at their lowest level, and he will return home to a damp, fireless hut and an empty food bowl, but he does not mind; if he cannot eat and drink, at least he can make merry, and the dance will continue tomorrow and the day after too.

The day of his first dance marks a high light in the life of a Shilluk boy. Up to this he has been a wistful onlooker, mere boy among other boys, whose occupation has been the minding of sheep and goats, the cleaning out of the cattle byre, the fetching and carrying for his betters; now, however, he has become as good as they are. He may dye his cloth as red and do up his hair as elaborately as they; carry real spears, not just some blunted cast-off a good-natured elder brother has given him; sit in council among his equals; take up his good new spear, if necessary, in defence of his village or his tribe.

On the day of the dance therefore, he attires himself with great care; his body shines with oil and is liberally powdered with red ochre; his hair is dressed in the way beloved of Shilluk youth; since 'tails' are *de rigueur* for these functions, he wears them: an antelope skin bound round his waist by a coloured sash with two strips of skin from the legs hanging

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down at the back; round his neck, instead of a white tie, he wears a collar of discs cut from the shell of an ostrich egg and a necklet of hair from the tail of a giraffe; his face is painted in some tasteful design in red, white and blue; his arms are loaded with all the beads he possesses or can beg, borrow or steal, and if he can fasten a large clanging bell to one elbow, he is extra pleased; his legs are crumpled with strings of metal shells, the size and shape of mussel shells, which give a most satisfying clashing sound when he moves; in his right hand he carries the three-foot long dancing stick of brown wood adorned at the top with two lugs of leather, in his left he grasps his dancing shield, a short, thick cylinder of ambach wood. Thus accoutred, he takes his beautiful new spear in the hand which holds the dancing stick, and with great pride sets out, surrounded by a bevy of admiring females, to join a number of his fellow dancers. Some of these are neophytes like himself, others have long since tasted the sweetness of the initiation dance, but all are picturesquely garbed and bedecked in the same way. In single file they proceed, running and yelling, leaping and whooping, towards the distant village where the drums are already beginning to throb and to which noisy throngs are converging from all sides. The girls follow on, no less excited than their brothers and sweethearts, and as they run along they give vent to their feelings in shrill ululations. They are more soberly dressed than the gorgeous males: an animal skin or a dark blue cloth is fastened on one shoulder and falls to the knees; they have anointed themselves with oil, put on their best beads, and perhaps smeared a little red dust on the top of their heads and touched up their faces with a little paint. Yet they need not worry that lack of charm or beauty will mean a lack of partners; if there are to be any wallflowers at the dance, they will be among the men, for every girl will have her beau. Nor need they have any misgivings about not knowing the correct steps; a leap upwards and backwards in time with the beat of the drums and a half turn to right and left with every dozen steps is all that is required. It is not grace of move-